

## Efforts against extremists continue

By Master Sgt. Dave Larsen  
1st Cav. Public Affairs

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - Efforts to reduce the violence by Iraqi security forces and the coalition in Baghdad continue as Operation Fardh Al-Qanoon enters its ninth week.

"Progress is measured neighborhood by neighborhood in an attempt to rid the capital city of extremists who are intent on terrorizing the population and undermining the elected government here," said Brig. Gen. John F. Campbell, the deputy commanding general for maneuver with MND-B and the 1st Cavalry Division.

He said Joint Security Stations, manned by coalition and Iraqi forces continue to stand up throughout the city and improve the overall security situation by maintaining a permanent presence in troubled neighborhoods.

"Threatened by the success of Joint Security Stations across Baghdad, Al Qaeda in Iraq continues to attack them with a combination of mortars, small arms fire and car bombs," said Campbell, who grew up in Fairfield, Calif. "On April 16, we saw their efforts thwarted by alert Soldiers."

At a JSS along the main highway out of northern Baghdad, the Soldiers on guard noticed a dump truck erratically driving towards the compound. When they engaged the vehicle, it attempted to evade and tipped over, spilling its contents and failing to detonate.

Checkpoints have also seen



(US Army Photo by Sgt. Tierney Nowland)

**Cpl. Joseph Casiano from Company B, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, checks out a vehicle for explosive devises during a cordon and search in Baghdad's Mansour district during Operation Arrowhead Strike 9 April 11.**

their share of successes and are working to prevent additional civilian deaths, Campbell said.

He pointed out the Iraqi national police, running a checkpoint outside of Sadr City Saturday, halted a vehicle for inspection and prevented it from detonating inside Sadr City.

"The driver, a suicide bomber, realized he would not reach his target and detonated the vehicle at the checkpoint," said Campbell, a 27-year Army veteran. "He killed himself, and wounded one innocent civilian that was passing by at the time."

Another initiative to improve security, Campbell said, is the emplacement of temporary con-

crete barriers around Baghdad neighborhoods that have experienced high levels of violence.

"The barriers are not meant to keep people out, or shut people in," Campbell explained. "What they allow Iraqi and coalition forces do is to closely monitor the traffic in and out the area, though, and help ensure the safety of the residents."

"Barriers are already in place in Baghdad's Ameriya district, and reports from some of the residents there is that they welcome the stepped-up security measures," Campbell said.

Clearing operations and cordon and search operations continue throughout the MND-B area of

operations. Two recent security operations that have been very successful - one on Baghdad's west side and the other in Diwaniyah, Iraq, a city south of the Iraqi capital.

"Operation Arrowhead Strike 9 began April 2 in the Mansour district," Campbell said. "The operation detained 49 suspects and found 23 caches, demonstrating to the Iraqi people the commitment of the coalition and Iraqi security forces to secure this city by targeting anti-Iraqi forces."

Operation Black Eagle,

see Update Page 4

# More First Team troops depart for Iraq

By Sgt. Robert Strain  
1st Cav. Public Affairs

FORT HOOD, Texas - While many Soldiers here go to the Kieschnick Physical Fitness Center at 6:30 a.m., about 100 Soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division came to say good-bye to friends and family before departing for Iraq.

These departing Soldiers are not from just one unit, and they aren't all going to the same place in Iraq - they're going to be joining their units, who are already set up there.

There are many reasons why these Soldiers leave home after their unit deployed.

Some weren't yet assigned to Fort Hood, while others, like Pfc. Harry Minter, a construction equipment operator with Company E, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, had medical problems and couldn't deploy with the rest of his unit.

Minter needed surgery on his knee in November, about



(Photo by Sgt. Robert Strain 1st Cav. Public Affairs)

**Christine Minter takes a picture of Spc. Phillip Knorr, her husband, Pfc. Harry Minter, and Spc. Cameron Riggins, who are with Co. E, 2nd Bn., 8th Cav. Regt., 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. before being deployed to Iraq April 20 at the Kieschnick Physical Fitness Center at Fort Hood, Texas.**

the same time his unit left for Iraq. After a painful recovery process, Minter is ready to join his fellow Soldiers in Iraq.

"They're just like my second family," Minter said.

Minter is excited to go to Iraq and do his job, yet anxious because the hardest part of deploying for him is leaving behind his wife and a 6-month-old daughter.

He plans to keep in touch

with his wife, Christine, through instant messaging and said there are plenty of friends and family nearby to help his wife through the deployment.

One Soldier, Spc. Jose Flores, a combat engineer with Company E, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment of the 1st Cavalry Divisions's 2nd Brigade Combat Team, admit-

ted to being nervous about leaving his family.

Flores' son, Josea Adrian, will turn 2 years old in May, and doesn't yet understand where his Dad is going, and why.

"Basically, I'm ready," Flores said.

The last good-byes marked the beginning of Flores' second tour in Iraq, both of them with the First Team.

## Arabic Phrase of the Day

zooja

**Defined:**  
wife

## Iraq 3-Day Weather Report



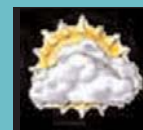
Today

High: 90  
Low:



Tomorrow

High: 90  
Low: 66



Friday

High: 91  
Low: 66

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## Baghdad in Brief

### Weapons cache found inside Baghdad mosque

BAGHDAD- Iraqi security forces and Multi-National Division - Baghdad troops uncovered a weapons cache at the Al Nur Mosque in Baghdad's Jihad neighborhood April 23 thanks to a tip from local residents.

The 1st Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 1st Iraqi National Police Division raided the location after locals reported seeing insurgents firing mortars and fleeing into the mosque. They also reported that the mosque hadn't been used for religious purposes in months.

Company B, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Inf. Div., cordoned off the area as the ISF conducted the raid.

The NPs found four 155 mm artillery rounds, 21 blocks of military-grade C-4 explosives, two propane tanks with C-4 explosive attached, three rolls of wire, one 107mm rocket rigged as an IED, a rifle, and a roll of wire wrapped around a soda bottle.

No MND-B forces entered the mosque at any time.

### Great American Country TV needs you for song dedications

BAGHDAD - MND-B Soldiers are invited to record song dedications for Great American Country television at the MND-B Media Operations Center April 27 between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.

The dedications are to be aired on GAC during Memorial Day weekend.

No appointments necessary, Soldiers interested need only to show up at the MOC, located in building 17-2 outside of the Division headquarters, to dedicate their song of choice to their loved ones.



(Photo by Command Sgt. Maj. David Martel 2-1 Inf.)

**Col. J.B. Burton, commander of 2nd "Dagger" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, presents Chesapeake, Va., native Lt. Col. Gregory D. Gadson with the Big Red One combat patch during a ceremony honoring the combat veterans of the 2nd "Proud Americans" Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment at Camp Liberty, Iraq April 20.**

## 'Proud Americans' earn combat patch

**By 1st Lt. Charles Bloomfield  
2-32 Field Artillery Regiment**

BAGHDAD - "Nearly 65 years ago, the first 'Proud Americans' earned their combat patch while participating in Operation Torch, America's introduction into World War II's European theater of operations," Lt. Col. Gregory D. Gadson, commander of the Proud Americans of 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment during their combat patch ceremony April 20. "As history would record, the Proud Americans were thrust into battle in an infantry role as the attacking enemy forced the Proud Americans to destroy their guns. Again, our nation has asked the Proud Americans to serve as Infantrymen in 'The Greatest Brigade Combat Team Ever Formed' - the [2nd] Dagger Brigade of the 1st Infantry Division."

Soldiers who serve in a hostile area

for at least 30 days are authorized to wear their unit's patch on the right sleeve of the Army Combat Uniform. Gadson's battalion is a traditional light artillery unit, now serving in an untraditional role.

The 'Proud Americans' conduct mounted and dismounted patrols daily and have not fired artillery since their days at Ft Riley, Kan.

"I am extremely proud of each and every Soldier in our battalion. We continue to refine our skills each day, broadening our capabilities and strengths," Gadson, a Chesapeake, Va., native said in his closing comments. "Like the first Proud Americans, we are not conducting a field artillery mission, but we strive to be experts at whatever the mission requires. Thank you for your hard work, dedication and commitment. No mission too difficult. No sacrifice too great. Duty First!"

# Operation Fardh Al-Qanoon update

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which continues in Diwaniyah, began April 6 with the intention to disrupt illegally-armed militia activity in that city. Campbell said more than 100 suspects have been detained there, ten weapons caches have been uncovered and 11 explosively-formed projectiles were found in two separate caches.

"The Iraqi-led operation is bringing back peace to the people of Diwaniyah," Campbell said. "In the aftermath of clashes with militiamen, the focus in Diwaniyah is now on maintaining security, reconstruction, the infrastructure and allowing residents to get on with their lives without fear."

Successes are also occurring regularly inside of Baghdad, as Iraqi security forces and their coalition partners aim to disrupt insurgent networks through precision, intelligence-driven targeting. Some of that intelligence is coming from the local populace.

In one such instance, Shia militia elements loyal to the rogue Jaysh al Mahdi (JAM) leader known as Abu Dura launched multiple rockets into the International Zone on Saturday, Campbell explained, as a response to the recent detention of several key leaders in this criminal group.

"In a sign that average Iraqis increasingly trust their security forces, a resident tipped off the national police to a second rocket launch site," he said. "The national police responded and disrupted the planned attack. Ten rockets were recovered before they could be fired. The police disabled the firing mechanism and removed the rockets for exploitation."

To date, more than 200,000 patrols have been conducted in support of Operation Fardh Al-Qanoon. More than 300 caches have been uncovered and more than 800 improvised explosive devices have been found. The Iraqi Army, police and Iraqi national police continue to lead the security effort in support of the operation, Campbell said.

The number of attacks against the civilian population of Baghdad has declined over the last six months Campbell said. In November 2006, 41 percent of all attacks reported in the city were directed against



(US Army Photo by Sgt. Tierney Nowland)

**Soldiers from Company A, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division lay out magazines of ammunition and weapons found in a room in order to get an accurate count during a cordon and search in Baghdad's Mansour district during Operation Arrowhead Strike 9 April 11.**

civilians, he noted. During the month of April, 20 percent were targeted the civilian population.

That 50 percent decline in attacks on Baghdad residents Campbell attributes to the increase in security patrols, clearing operations on-going throughout the city and the creation of safer neighborhoods.

Campbell said that while attacks have continued to decline over the first nine weeks of the new security plan, some attacks have been very lethal in nature, noting the four vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonations within the MND-B footprint April 18.

"Al Qaeda in Iraq indiscriminately targets civilians across Baghdad intent only on causing chaos to undermine the government of Iraq and dishearten the Iraqi people," said Campbell, 50, a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. "We've deprived terrorists from attacking the pedestrian markets in eastern Baghdad by enhanced security measures, so Al Qaeda in Iraq sought out new targets for their terror attacks like the bus depot near the Sadriyah Market during rush hour on Wednesday."

Shia militia members have also brought their own brand of lethality to Iraq, in the form of explosively-formed projectiles. Since

January 1, Campbell said 54 EFPs have detonated within his division's area of operation against coalition forces, killing 19 service members and wounding 84 more.

"We've been able to find 37 EFPs since the first of the year, and we continue our efforts to shut down roadside bombers," the general said.

Despite the bombings, the level of sectarian violence in the Iraqi capital has also decreased, Campbell said. There has been a sharp decline in the number of murders in Baghdad security districts.

"The April daily rate for murder victims is the lowest in the past six months," Campbell said. He said there has been a 27 percent reduction in murders compared to last month, and a 65 percent decline compared to November 2006."

Despite the reduction, terrorists continue to use sectarian slayings to intimidate the local populace. Al Qaeda in Iraq brutally executed members of the local Sunni population in Rashid security district who would not support their extremist doctrine.

"The bottom line is that we are in a very tough fight with our Iraqi security force brothers and the government of Iraq," Campbell said. "We remain committed to them and the Iraqi people."



# Lieutenant takes on role of brigade commander for a day

By Sgt. 1st Class Rick Emert  
1st ACB Public Affairs

TAJI, Iraq - It was quite a jump in position as a 1st Air Cavalry Brigade platoon leader suddenly became the brigade commander, albeit only for one day.

Hadley, Mass., native 1st Lt. Robert Massey shadowed 1st Air Cavalry Brigade Commander Col. Dan Shanahan throughout the day, beginning with physical training and going through many, many meetings into the evening in his role as brigade commander for a day.

"I think I was inspiring battalion commanders, imparting my vast experience on them," Massey joked.

He certainly didn't handle them with kid gloves as he talked to the commanders in the meetings.

"After the second or third meeting, I would defer to him for questions, and he would put his two cents in," Shanahan said. "He asked those battalion commanders some tough questions. I think he had fun with it, and I think the battalion commanders had a little fun with it as well."

Of course, the day was not meant to be all fun and games. Shanahan started the brigade commander for a day program to give a glimpse into what happens at the brigade command level and to help guide junior officers and warrant officers on their career paths, he said.

The day was jam packed with physical training, meetings, some one-on-one conferring between Shanahan and Massey in the commander's office, meetings, visits with Soldiers on the flight line and more meetings.

"His day was full of excitement," Shanahan said. "We started early on doing some PT, and then it was meeting after meeting



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Rick Emert 1st ACB Public Affairs)

**Colonel Dan Shanahan (right), 1st Air Cavalry Brigade commander, and 1st Lt. Robert Massey (center), 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, listen to Maj. Kevin McPherson, the brigade personnel officer, as Lt. Col. Tom Jessee (left), the brigade executive officer, looks on at a battle update assessment at Camp Taji, Iraq.**

and engagement after engagement. We did a little bit of [Uniform Code of Military Justice] in there as well. The goodness was that he was able to see a typical day. It was full of some things that could really help him in his career and also give him perspective back in his platoon to say that, hopefully, his leaders are making some pretty good decisions out there."

And how might the young Black Hawk pilot have handled a few more meetings?

"I would have been there; I would have given the old college effort," Massey quipped. "Really, it all goes back to having a lot of information to put out to a lot of different people. It's overwhelming. For someone who's focused at the tactical level, who's focused on making air missions happen on a day-to-day basis, and - with good reason - not being completely focused on the operational strategy that we have here in Iraq, to see the interaction that actually pans out in this divi-

sion - there's a lot more to it than just going out and flying your air mission requests and your air assaults. That's just a small piece of the bigger puzzle that's going on with ground units out in Baghdad."

A look at the big picture was part of what Shanahan, who was an aide de camp to a general at one stage of his career, said he intended to get across to his brigade commander for a day, as well as letting them know that being the brigade commander isn't always about fixing or changing things.

"I think young officers in their career, if they can be an aide, if they can do a job like that where they watch somebody, help somebody perform their job better; that's an important aspect and kind of shows some insights that you wouldn't get in a normal job," Shanahan said. "The young warrant officers and young lieutenants - you hear them say every once in a while: 'Wow, if I was brigade commander for a day, I'd

change that.'

"I'm trying to reach out to those guys - just give them a little insight on some of the stresses that happen in our day to day life in brigade command."

That message seems to have reached Massey loud and clear.

"I took away from it that there's an awful lot of work to do," Massey said. "There's a lot of organization that needs to happen, and that's really what Colonel Shanahan is doing at that level. He's pushing information down, and he's responding to battalion commanders who have an awful lot of issues, an awful lot of concerns - not only with personnel, but also the operational structure as a whole. When are guys redeploying? How are the operations that we're doing now influencing ground units out in Baghdad? At my level it's very much focused on the day-to-day missions, the day-to-day flights that we do around the Baghdad area, and obviously there's much more to it than just those pieces of the puzzle."

It may be like one conductor trying to lead several orchestras simultaneously, but Shanahan said he wouldn't change a thing, and that it is something that any officer should aspire toward and look forward to.

"This is something that you can look forward to," Shanahan said. "I can't think of any better job. In fact, I've said many times this is the best job in the Army, and I'm very, very fortunate to have been selected for this. I'm humbled every day as I lead these great troopers. To share that feeling with a young lieutenant as we spend 12, 18 hours together in one day isn't much, but it's eye-opening for them, and I enjoyed the opportunity."